

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04921 01 OF 03 052011Z

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4490

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USAFE RAMSTEIN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG

USDOCSOUTH NAPLES IT

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 04921

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, NATO, SP

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO: RECENT SPANISH EDITORIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MADRID 04921 01 OF 03 052011Z

COMMENT

1. SUMMARY: THE NATO QUESTION HAS RECEIVED SHARPLY INCREASED MEDIA ATTENTION IN SPAIN IN RECENT WEEKS. THE ISSUES ARE BEING DEFINED SOMEWHAT MORE CLEARLY FOR THE SPANISH PUBLIC. CURRENT LINKAGES TO OTHER ISSUES IN THE PRESS ARE PRINCIPALLY TO EC MEMBERSHIP AND THE DEFENSE OF

THE CANARIES. SOME OF THIS ACTIVITY DIRECTLY REFLECTS THE GOS HOPE THAT DOMESTIC POLITICAL EVENTS WILL ALLOW SCHEDULING THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON NATO MEMBERSHIP IN THE FALL. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE THE GOS, IN MARCH, DEFINED ITS OWN POSITION ON NATO MEMBERSHIP MORE CLEARLY, THE SPANISH MEDIA HAS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLY MORE ATTENTION TO NATO THAN AT ANY TIME IN RECENT YEARS. A PROMINENT SPANISH JOURNALIST WILL BE PUBLISHING IN JUNE A FAVORABLE BOOK ON THE QUESTION OF SPANISH MEMBERSHIP. AT LEAST ONE OTHER BOOK, ALSO POSITIVE, IS IN PREPARATION. SEVERAL LEADING SPANISH JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN TO THE EMBASSY IN RECENT WEEKS SEEKING DETAILED INFORMATION FOR ARTICLES. UNFAVORABLE ARTICLES ARE OF COURSE BEING PUBLISHED, AS BEFORE, BUT THE BALANCE HAS NOW SHIFTED SOMEWHAT TO THE POSITIVE SIDE. SOME OF THIS ACTIVITY REFLECTS EFFORTS BY THE GOS TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION FOR THE EVENTUAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, WHICH IT HOPES CAN TAKE PLACE AS EARLY AS NEXT FALL, ASSUMING A SUCCESSFUL REFERENDUM ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND A GENERAL SENSE OF CONFIDENCE ON SUAREZ' PART IN THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL POSITION OF BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UCD.

3. IN RECENT EDITORIALS, THE MAJOR MADRID PAPERS HAVE MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE ISSUE:
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04921 01 OF 03 052011Z

-- "EL PAIS" (APRIL 16): WE MUST NOT TAKE PRECIPITATE DECISIONS...IMPOSSIBLE BEFORE FULL SPANISH POLITICAL NORMALIZATION...OTHER FOREIGN QUESTIONS ARE MORE IMPORTANT: NORTH AFRICA, POSSIBLE MEDITERRANEAN POLICY...NATO IS ONLY ONE OF THE MILITARY APPENDAGES OF THE POLITICS OF BLOCS, BEFORE WHICH MEDIUM POWERS, SUCH AS SPAIN, CAN DO LITTLE OR NOTHING. BUT GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL LEADERS MUST IMAGINE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS WHICH LIMIT THE POWER OF MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON. ...IT IS A SHAME THAT THE FIRST SERIOUS, INTER-PARTY DEBATE HELD BY THE SPANISH POLITICAL FORCES (AT DITCHLEY PARK) WAS OUTSIDE OUR BORDERS AND UNDER AMERICAN SPONSORSHIP. ("EL PAIS", OF LIBERAL INCLINATION, HAS BEEN AGAINST MEMBERSHIP IN NATO FOR SOME TIME.)

-- "YA" (APRIL 22): IF WE WERE ABLE TO CHOOSE, NEUTRALITY WOULD BE THE BEST OPTION. BUT ONE DOES NOT CHOOSE WHAT ONE WANTS, BUT WHAT ONE CAN. IS SPAIN IN A POSITION TO CHOOSE? NO STEP HAS YET BEEN TAKEN, EITHER FOR OR AGAINST SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO...THE FINAL DECISION TAKEN IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER MUST BE PRECEDED BY REFLECTION, WISDOM AND STUDY OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVAN-

TAGES, FROM THE PURELY STRATEGIC TO THE ECONOMIC -- THEY
TALK OF A COST CLOSE TO \$800 MILLION -- WITH THE UNIQUE
AND DETERMINING PERSPECTIVE BEING NATIONAL SECURITY.
MEMBERSHIP IN NATO IS NOT THE ONLY OPTION AVAILABLE TO
SPAIN. ...SPANISH ATTENTION TOWARD THE SOUTH ATLANTIC IS
EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN TOWARD THE NORTH ATLANTIC. THE
VALUE OF THE CANARIES, FOR EXAMPLE, SURPASSES THE BOUNDS
OF THE GEOSTRATEGIC...AFRICA IS TODAY A VITAL FACTOR AT
THE TIME OF A DECISION ON OUR PRESENCE IN OR ABSENCE FROM
NATO.

-- "YA" (APRIL 30): THE MAJORITY OF ATTENDEES AT THE
SESSIONS (AT DITCHLEY PARK) AGREED, BOTH FROM MILITARY AND

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04921 02 OF 03 052114Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 ICA-11 TRSE-00 NSC-05
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 MADRID 04921

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES, THAT NATO AND THE COMMON MARKET ARE ASSOCIATED FORMS WHICH HAVE A BASIC WESTERN IDENTITY. IN CONSEQUENCE, OUR POSSIBLE INCORPORATION IN NATO MUST
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PAGE 02 MADRID 04921 02 OF 03 052114Z

BE CONSIDERED WITH OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE (ECONOMIC) COMMUNITY. SEPARATED, THEY ARE NO MORE THAN TWO PHASES OF THE SAME INTEGRATING PROCESS. THE EC MAY VERY POSSIBLY BE A MARGINAL INSTITUTION FOR US INTERESTS, BUT FOR SPAIN, IF OUR ENTRY INTO NATO FACILITATES AND ACCELERATES THE STEPS TOWARDS OUR INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, THAT IS ANOTHER POINT TO KEEP IN MIND AT THE HOUR OF DECISION. SPAIN HAS EVERY RIGHT TO PLAY THE ATLANTIC CARD IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EC. ...IT WOULD NOT BE TOO MUCH TO EXPLAIN TO THE EUROPEAN "ALLIES" THE DESIRABILITY OF ACCEPTING SPAIN IN WESTERN ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS, IF THEY WANT TO INCLUDE IT IN THE DEFENSIVE ONES AS WELL. (MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD "YA" HAS BEEN RIDING THE FENCE ON NATO MEMBERSHIP FOR SOME TIME.)

-- "ARRIBA" (MARCH 29): UNTIL THE QUESTION OF SPANISH ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, ON WHICH THERE IS A CONSENSUS, IS RESOLVED, THE QUESTION OF BEING AN ARMED GUARD OF AN ECONOMIC STRUCTURE TO WHICH WE STILL DO NOT BELONG OBVIOUSLY CANNOT BE BROUGHT UP. WE MUST ESTABLISH PRIORITIES. ALL OF US, GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION.

-- "ARRIBA" (APRIL 22): WE MUST BEGIN WITH SOME BASIC SUPPOSITIONS: NATO IS ONE THING AND SATO (SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION) IS ANOTHER, NON-EXISTENT. IN THE CANARIES THERE MUST ONLY BE SPANISH MILITARY BASES FOR SPANISH USE...NO MATTER WHAT DECISION IS TAKEN WE MUST REVISE THE TREATY WITH THE US...NATO DOES NOT COVER OUR POSSIBLE THEATRE OF OPERATIONS IN NORTH AFRICA; NEITHER DOES THE US-SPANISH TREATY...THE DEBATE MUST REVOLVE AROUND THE TYPE OF COMPENSATION, BESIDES CONVINCING ARGUMENTS, WHICH EUROPE CAN OFFER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT NATO IS THE DEFENSIVE SHIELD OF AN ECONOMIC EUROPE AND IF WE ENJOY HER BENEFITS WE MUST SHARE THE INCONVENIENCES.
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04921 02 OF 03 052114Z

...IN THE DEBATE, EUROPE WILL HAVE TO DO MORE THAN TALK BEHIND CLOSED DOORS WITH POLITICIANS...WHAT DOES MEAN

SOMETHING TO US IS SHARING THE EUROPEAN PIE AND PARTICIPATING IN DECISIONS IN FULL MEASURE. (GENERALLY CONSERVATIVE "ARRIBA" HAS NO CONSISTENT EDITORIAL LINE. ITS FRANCOIST PAST SHOWS IN ITS INCLINATION TO REGARD NATO MEMBERSHIP AS ANOTHER IN A LONG SERIES OF HORSE TRADING VENTURES WITH THE U.S. AND WITH A EUROPE OF WHICH IT IS NOT FULLY A PART.)

-- "ABC" (MARCH 28): THE U.S. POSITION ON SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO IS THAT IT MUST BE THE RESULT OF DECISIONS BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT AND CORTES. ...HOW THE DECISION IS MADE IS THE CENTRAL POINT OF SOCIALIST (PSOE) DIFFERENCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT...A PARLIAMENTARY DECISION IS NOT ENOUGH; THEY SAY THE NATIONAL DECISION MUST BE RATIFIED BY A REFERENDUM. ...THIS INTERNATIONAL POLICY OF OUR SOCIALISTS IS NOT IN HARMONY WITH THE LOGIC OF SPANISH NATIONAL INTERESTS. ...NO MATTER HOW IMPORTANT THE QUESTION OF OUR ENTRY INTO NATO MAY BE, IT IS NOT IMPORTANT IN THE SPECIFIC MANNER THAT REQUIRES A REFERENDUM.

-- "ABC" (MAY 3): IF THE SPANISH SOCIALISTS REMAIN STUBBORN TOWARDS EUROPE IN PARTICULAR AND THE ATLANTIC REALITY IN GENERAL, IN THEIR DOUBLE UTOPIA OF PROPOSALS FOR AUTO-GESTION AND GEOPOLITICAL LIMBO FOR THE CARDINAL POINTS OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY, IT WILL NOT BE AT ALL STRANGE THAT, LATER ON, THEY GENERATE EVEN MORE DIFFICULTIES FOR INTEGRATION IN EUROPE AND IN THE GRAND ATLANTIC EQUATION THAN ALL THOSE WHICH WERE BLAMED, AND WITH REASON, ON THE POLITICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE FRANCO REGIME. (CONSERVATIVE "ABC" FAVORS MEMBERSHIP.)

-- "INFORMACIONES" (APRIL 18): IT IS GOOD TO HAVE THE

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04921 03 OF 03 052013Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 MADRID 04921

NECESSARY INFORMATION AND CLARIFICATION ON THE PROS AND
CONS OF THIS HYPOTHETICAL LINK TO A MILITARY BLOC --
"INFORMACIONES", IN FAVOR OF JOINING, HAS RECENTLY
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PAGE 02 MADRID 04921 03 OF 03 052013Z

OFFERED ITS PAGES TO SUPPORTERS OF BOTH SIDES -- BUT IT
DOES NOT SEEM CORRECT THAT THE FIRST PRE-PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATE TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE OUR BORDERS. ...THIS NECESSARY,
POLEMIC DEBATE, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEGUN THROUGH ARTICLES
IN THE MEDIA, BEFORE CROSSING THE PYRENEES SHOULD ENTER
THE CORTES. ...IT IS THE DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE WHOLE OF SPANISH SOCIETY WHO SHOULD FULLY DISCUSS
THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE AND CHOOSE A PROCESS OF PARLIAMENTARY
VOTE TO DECIDE IF WE SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT JOIN NATO.
(MODERATE "INFORMACIONES" IS STRONGLY PRO-NATO.) EATON

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